

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: PINT, DR
SUBJECT: BALAGUER IS NOMINATED FOR REELECTION; SURPRISE CANDIDATE
SURFACES AS HIS RUNNING MATE

1. THE ELECTION ASSEMBLY OF THE RULING REFORMINSTA PARTY (PR) ADOPTED BY ACCLMATION THIS AFTERNOON THE NOMINATIONS OF JOAQUIN BALAGUER TO RUN FOR A FOURTH TERM AS PRESIDENT AND YOUTHFUL FERNANDO ALVAREZ BOGAERT AS VICE PRESIDENT.
2. THE SURPRISE NOMINATION OF ALVAREZ, A 37-YEAR OLD US-TRAINED SANTIAGO ECONOMIST AND PRESENT AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA, IS STILL TO BE CONFIRMED BY BALAGUER WHO, IN A ONE-HOUR SPEECH TO THE PR CONVENTION NEVER MENTIONED ALVAREZ' NAME. BALAOER HAS UNTIL MARCH 31 UNDER DOMINICAN ELECTROAL LAWS TO FORMALLY NAME HIS RUNNING MATE, A PERQUISITE GRANTED HIM UNDER THE BY-LAWS OF THE REFORMISTA PARTY.
3. HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONLY SMALL DOUBT THAT ALVAREZ WILL IN THE END BE NAMED PR VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. THE PRESENT VICE PRESIDENT, CARLOS RAFAEL GOICO MORALES, WHO EAS GENERALLY EXPECTED TO BE NAMED FOR A THIRD TERM,

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WAS NOMINATED AS THE PR SENATE CANDIATE FROM HIS HOME PROVINCE OF EL SEIBO.

4. THE PROCEDURE ADOPTED BY BALAGUER AND HIS INNER CIRCLE TO STPRING THE ALVAREZ CANDIDACY, WHICH IS TAKEN HERE AS TANTAMOUNT TO THE NAMING OF BALAGUER'S HEIR, HAD POLITICAL CIRCLES IN SOME CONFUSION. BALAGUER HAS PULLED SEVERAL

SURPRISES IN RECENT WEEKS AND IS DEEMED CAPABLE OF YET ANOTHER TURN-ABOUT. RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, HE PUBLICLY SAID HE HAD COMMITTED HIMSELF TO CHOOSING AN OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY FROM THE "EAST"--WHICH WAS UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN GOICO MORALES ALVAREZ, OF COURSE, IS FROM THE NORTH.

5. SELECTION OF ALVAREZ, IF INDEED HE IS NAMED BY BALAGUER, PUTS TO REST ONE OF GREAT UNKNOWNNS IN DEVELOPING CAMPAIGN. NAMES OF POSSIBLE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIATES IN RECENT MONTHS RAN THE GAMUT FROM NOMINATION OF INCUMBENT, GOICO MORALES, TO THE PRESIDENT'S SISTER, EMMA BALAGUER DE VALLEJO. MOST EAGER SEEKER OF POSITION WAS SANTIAGO SENATOR AND BUSINESSMAN SOCRATES "CHINO" PICHARDO, WHO IN RECENT DAYS RAN AS MANY AS TEN FULL PAGES OF ADVERTISING IN EACH OF SANTO DOMINGO'S DAILIES IN SUPPORT OF A BALAGUER/"CHINO" TICKET. THERE WERE SEVERAL OTHER PR ASPIRANTS WHO WERE LESS ACTIVE.

6. QUESTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE TOOK ON NEW MEANING OVER PAST YEAR AS BALAGUER'S EYESIGHT GRADUALLY FAILED AND HE WAS RUMORED TO HAVE OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS. EVEN SO, THE PRESIDENT SHOWED SURPRISING VITALITY IN RECENT MONTHS. HE NEVER LET UP IN HIS GRUELING WORK PACE, CONTINUING HIS WEEKEND TRIPS TO INTERIOR TO DEDICATE NEW SCHOOLS, ROADS, HOUSING PROJECTS, ETC., AND MAKING TWO OFFICIAL TRIPS TO THE US. THE QUESTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NONETHELESS RIVETED PUBLIC ATTENTION ON TODAY'S PR CONVENTION.

7. DESPITE HIS YOUTH, ALVAREZ IS TALENTED AND EXPERIENCED. HE IS ALSO VERY AMBITIOUS. INDEED, HIS AMBITION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN REASON BALAGUER, UPSET BY ALVAREZ' CRITICISMS, DEMOTED HIM TWO YEARS AGO FIRST AS AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN, AND LAST AUGUST TO CARACAS. PREVIOUSLY, HE HAD SERVED AS SECRETARY OF FINANCE, HELD FOR ALMOST FIVE YEARS DIRECTORSHIP OF POWERFUL STATE SUGAR COUNCIL (CEA), AND BEFORE THAT SERVED FOR FOUR YEARS AS SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE. IN CEA JOB, ALVAREZ MANIPULATED LARGE AMOUNTS OF STATE FUNDS AND SUGAR LANDS WITH CONSUMATE POLITICAL SKILL, INDEBTING BOTH IMPORTANT CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FIGURES BOTH TO BALAGUER AND HIMSELF. HE RAN BALAGUER'S 1970 AND 1974 REELECTION CAMPAIGNS, AND WHEN HE RETURNED FROM CARACAS LAST WEEK, HE TOLD FRIENDS HE WAS TO ORGANIZE REELECTION EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT, UNTIL NOW SOMEWHAT UNCOORDINATED.

8. COMMENT: SELECTION OF FERNANDO (KNOWN HERE AS "FERNANDITO") ALVAREZ IS INDEED A SURPRISE IN A COUNTRY WHERE POLITICAL SURPRISES, ESPECIALLY THOSE MASTERMINDED

BY BALAGUER, ARE TO BE EXPECTED. IF HE IS INDEED BALAGUER'S
CHOICE, SELECTION OF ALVAREZ THROWS INTERESTING NEW ELEMENT
INTO ALREADY BOILING CAMPAIGN POT. IMPLICIT ISSUE IN
CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN FAILURE OF BALAGUER IN 12-YEAR RULE
TO PREPARE A SUCCESSOR OR ANY OTHER FORM OF INSTITUTIONALI-
ZATION OF POLITICAL PROCESS. BALAGUER HAD NO ANSWER UNTIL
TODAY TO THE POINTED QUESTION, AFTER BALAGUER WHAT? AND
COSE ONLY TO REMIND AUDIENCE THAT FRANKLIN ROOSEVENT AND LUIS
MUNOZ MARIN O PUERTO RICO HAD RUN FOR FOUR TERMS AND NO ONE
HAD CALLED THEM "CONTINUISTAS" CHOICE OF YOUTHFUL,
TENDS TO UNDERCUT THIS CRITICISM AND COULD
GIVE REFORMIST PARTY A STRONG TRUMP CARD IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS.
IF INDEED SELECTED, ALVAREZ' DESIRE TO BECOME HEIR APPARENT
WILL IN LONG RUN DEPEND ON HOW HE PERFORMS, AS JUDGED BY
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BALAGUER.
HURWITCH

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